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One dead in home fire

FATALITY One person was killed as a fire started in the lower-level kitchen of a northeast Edmonton home yesterday, spreading quickly throughout the entire structure.

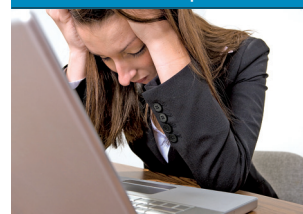
Firefighters were called to a home at 113rd Avenue and 84th Street around 3 p.m. yesterday. A person was found inside the home and was declared dead at the scene.

The deceased in Edmonton's third fatal fire of this year has not yet been identified.

No other injuries were reported as a result of the incident, and the cause has not yet been determined.

METRO EDMONTON

Seasonal Depression



Economic woes impact holidays
Second in a two-part series, pg 8

Health pg 18

Happiness is still not for sale

Entertainment pg 19



Button's Blanchett ages on screen

Hanukkah Celebrating the miracle of oil



Prime Minister Stephen Harper, home in Calgary for the holidays, lights the menorah at city hall yesterday at a Hanukkah celebration. Hanukkah, the eight-day Jewish festival of lights, began Sunday night.

Revellers grounded

Snowstorms, present checks force long delays at airport

VICTORIA HANDSIDES
victoria.handysides@metronews.ca

Minor delays are causing major headaches for travellers trying to get into or out of the 780 in time for Christmas.

Unseasonable coastal snowstorms are to blame for the long lines of grounded flights, forcing frustrated passengers to set up camp in airport terminals, shuffling around holiday plans in the few days before Christmas.

"This had to happen right before Christmas," said Jason, a Fort McMurray resident bound for Seattle whose flight was cancelled

yesterday afternoon. "It's looking like I won't get in until tomorrow night. What am I supposed to do in Edmonton for another day?"

Yesterday, only one runway at the Vancouver airport was operational, causing day-long delays for some passengers. Flights to and through the West Coast were pushed back up to eight hours.

WestJet spokesman Robert Palmer said the airline cancelled 30 flights yesterday, and 180 across the country in the past week. The airline will be adding extra flights, and putting stranded passengers up in hotels.

Coupled with long delays

"Even though it's nobody's fault, this has been the worst travel experience I've ever had."

Passenger Jason of Fort McMurray

were ill-prepared holiday travellers who packed wrapped presents that have to be unwrapped and searched at customs.

"Some people who aren't accustomed to travelling still don't remember they're not allowed certain liquids and can't wrap presents," said Edmonton Inter-

national Airport spokesman Jim Rudolph.

The best suggestion for those heading out of Edmonton International is to check the airport's website, www.flyeia.com, for flight delays and airport procedure, Rudolph said.

As the snow begins to let up and temperatures warm up on the West Coast in the next few days, air travel should resume to a tolerable level of Christmas hysteria, as most travellers fly out of Edmonton in the days before Christmas Eve, Rudolph said.

"Even though it's nobody's fault, this has been the worst travel experience I've ever had," Jason said.

Suspected stabbing of boy an accident?

VICTORIA HANDSIDES
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INVESTIGATION A horrible accident may be to blame for the death of a seven-year-old boy on Sunday.

The boy, who lived at a home at 14224 — 25 St., was allegedly stabbed to death in the home around 2 p.m. Sunday.

Police are investigating to determine if one of the boy's brothers is responsible. The boy is one of three brothers, all under age 13.

Police have not ruled the death a homicide, but are treating it as suspicious.

A neighbour across the street from the victim's home hurled profanity at media yesterday morning, urging them out of the area.

He said the death is nothing more than a tragic accident, and the family is mourning the loss of the young boy.



Edmonton home where the alleged stabbing took place.

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Local



Heinz's helping hand

A giant Canadian food distributor has lent a giant helping hand to the Edmonton Food Bank for the holiday season. H.J. Heinz Company of Canada has donated \$50,000 in Heinz Nurture Infant Formula baby food to the charity, in honour of its 100th anniversary in Canada. **METRO EDMONTON**

Give an animal a home for the holidays

ADOPTION A local animal shelter is reducing its rates to help find homes for a "cat-astrophic" number of felines and rabbits.

The "Home for the Holidays" campaign, taking place from Dec. 26 to Dec. 31, will give prospective pet owners the chance to adopt animals for a fraction of the regular price.

Cat adoption fees are being cut in half, reduced from \$110 to \$55. Families will also be able to take home two rabbits for the price of one.

More than 80 rabbits are calling the shelter home — more than eight times the average number. The shelter also has an influx of more than 120 cats and kittens — more than double the average.

All animals that find good homes from the Edmonton Humane Society are spayed or neutered, with their first sets of vaccinations.

All animals can be viewed on the shelter's website at www.edmontonhumane.com.

VICTORIA HANDYSIDES/
METRO EDMONTON



Tobacco takes another hit

VICTORIA HANDYSIDES
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Local anti-tobacco activists feel the smoke is finally starting to clear, and they are steps closer to winning the war on smoking in Alberta.

Results from the provincial government's quarterly fiscal update released last month indicate that tobacco sales have been on a steady decline since implementation of the Tobacco Reduction Act, which came into effect almost one year ago.

"This is world class legislation," said Action on Smoking and Health executive director Les Hagen. "Only a handful of jurisdictions globally have implemented the same measures as Alberta."

Projected tobacco tax revenue is short \$50 million for the current fiscal year, and tobacco shipments are on a five per cent decline.

The reductions follow a provincial smoking ban, erasing of powerwalls, and a



Rob Z., left, and Kyle Harding, right, have a smoke on Whyte Avenue yesterday.

63 per cent tax increase on tobacco in 2007.

The final steps in the Tobacco Reduction Act — banning tobacco sales in pharmacies, supermarkets, and post-secondary institutions

— commences on New Year's Day.

"Health professionals should not be engaged in the sale of a deadly and addictive product," Hagen said. "And a public institution

should not be facilitating the sale of this product to their students and staff."

It's estimated that over 1,000 tobacco retailers will be eliminated when the legislation takes effect.

Meteor fragments might be record setting

The fireball that illuminated much of the Northern Alberta/Saskatchewan sky in November, is expected to make Canadian history as the largest record meteorite fall.

The recovery of the shattered remains that lay strewn across a field southeast of Lloydminster, are now the focus for U of C planetary scientist Alan Hildebrand.

"The last day the search

"We will try to organize the biggest meteorite search effort."

Alan Hildebrand

teams were out, it snowed all day and we still found five meteorites, which is ridiculous," Hildebrand said. "That

just shows how many are out there."

Hildebrand and his research team recovered more than 100 pieces of the meteorite and expect to find many more when the search resumes in the spring.

"We will try to organize the biggest meteorite search effort that Canada has ever seen," said Hildebrand.

It has been estimated

about one tonne of space material fell from the sky and Hildebrand expects close to 10,000 fragments hit the Earth.

With the help of researchers worldwide, Hildebrand, hopes the recovered fragments of meteorite will provide some insight into its origin.

CANDICE WARD/
FOR METRO CANADA

Volunteers hope to rescue horses

HELP A group of Edmonton volunteers have been sifting through the deep snowy hills of a B.C. mountain in hopes of rescuing two horses stuck in the frigid temperatures.

The abandoned horses were found last week buried about two-metres deep and ever since, local volunteers travelled to Mount Renshaw, just west of Jasper, to rescue the frost bitten and starving horses. **METRO EDMONTON**

News in brief

PROPERTY The provincial government is capping the fees municipalities can charge to launch a complaint about their property tax assessment beginning in the new year. The maximum charge for filing an appeal for single-family homes will be \$50, while multi-family and commercial buildings will be \$650 the government said Monday. **METRO EDMONTON**

metronews.ca

What's online today.

Video Afghan army gets training from Canadians on Styrofoam battlefields at metronews.ca/canada

Video Canadians could have the first coast-to-coast white Christmas since 1971 at metronews.ca/canada

Comment Allan Small on whether it's time to invest in gold at metronews.ca/investing



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The City of Edmonton is urging drivers to slow down on icy bridge decks. Three to five collisions a day since the plunge in temperatures have been reported on the Beverly, Cloverbar and Quesnell Bridges. **METRO EDMONTON**

The Art of the Brick

VICTORIA HANDYSIDES
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While most boys put away their toys when partying and girls became more appealing, artist Nathan Sawaya was building a new, brightly coloured dimension, brick by brick.

Almost a decade later, and Sawaya's Lego world has gone global, and has

set up camp temporarily at the Telus World of Science.

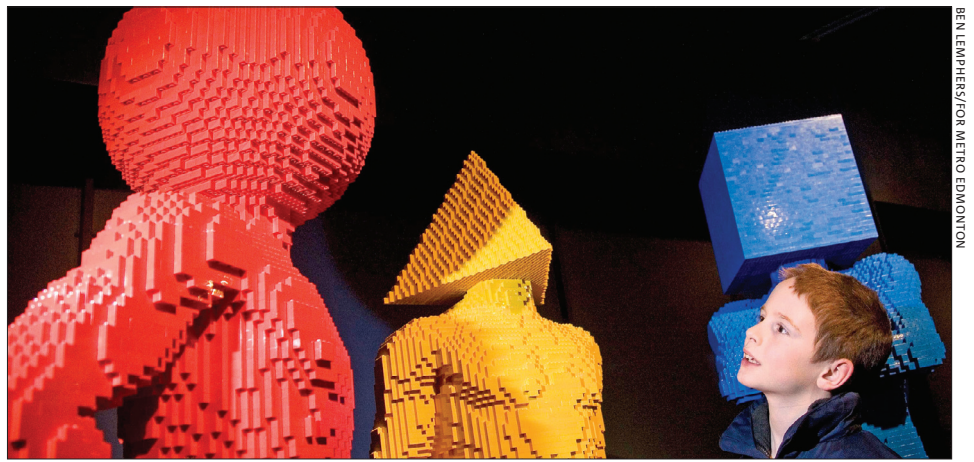
"I realized that there's a nostalgic connection immediately, and people relate more with Lego than they do with marble," the Washington-born artist said. "If a kid goes home at the end of the day, he's not going to have a slab of marble in his living room."

The three-dimensional art pieces are made up of

1.5 million Lego bricks, and include people, portraits, trees and flowers. Over 30 of Sawaya's whimsical creations are on display.

"Adults sometimes come to the exhibit with a skeptical eye, but everyone has, or has a kid, that's played with Lego at least once in their life, so everyone can relate."

The Art of the Brick runs until May 3.



Cody McChesney, 9, checks out life-size Lego sculptures yesterday afternoon at The Art of the Brick at the Telus World of Science.

BEN LEMPHERS/FOR METRO EDMONTON



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Holiday indulgence, New Year's resolve

KRISTA SYLVESTER
Metro Canada



"It's a new year, a new beginning. Resolutions, they are trends and we see a lot of it in January."

Trainer Tristan Zapata

Call it pre-Christmas guilt or after-New Year shame, but the resolutions are already piling up at fitness gyms and wellness centres across the province.

"January and February is definitely our busiest time of the year for those New Year's resolutions," owner and laser technician Ken Wallace said.

Wallace runs the Imagine Laserworks in Calgary and says people are always making New Year's resolutions to lose weight and quit smoking.

"But making New Year's resolutions aren't really a good idea because most people have trouble keeping them by putting too much pressure on themselves," he said. "People should just do it to do it."

And while January is a busy time of year for Infinite Fitness in Edmonton, personal trainer Tristan Zapata

said those serious about their workout are working hard, pre-Christmas.

"They know there is a lot of social things, eating and drinking going on over the holidays so they work extra hard. We don't discourage those things, but just want them to be smart about enjoying it," he said.

But Zapata said there are always the New Year's resolutions people who come in and go hard for the first few weeks, but end up tapering off without the proper guidance.

"It's a new year, a new beginning. Resolutions, they are trends and we see a lot of it in January," Zapata added.

Foul odour linked to spill of chemical

MERCAPTAN Anyone wondering what the smelly odour in the city this weekend was, wonder no more.

While they couldn't figure out the stench on Sunday, authorities have now determined the foul smell was spilled mercaptan at the ATCO facility. Mercaptan is a chemical added to natural gas and propane to make it smell.

METRO EDMONTON

Info sought on missing Fox Creek woman

CONCERNS Fox Creek RCMP believe a missing woman may be in Edmonton and hope the public may have information.

Patricia Crain, 53, was visiting family in Edmonton but didn't show up for work on Friday.

Authorities are wondering if she maybe stayed longer in Edmonton, but also worry about her medical condition.

METRO EDMONTON

News in brief

HEALTH BOARD Alberta's single provincial health board is projecting a deficit of \$700 million for the year, which is believed several times greater than the expected deficit of

the previous health regions combined. Reports have come forward claiming the superboard's deficit could reach as high as \$1.3 billion.

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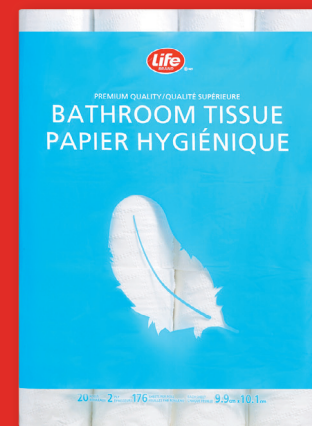
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8

There's growing concern for the safety of a Toronto woman missing in China. The woman's relatives in Windsor, Ont., say they have had no contact with her in almost six weeks. **CBC NEWS ONLINE**

Canadian woman missing in China

Canada

Financial worries compound stress

Holidays and woeful economy a bad mix

KRISTEN THOMPSON
Metro Canada

With many Canadian workers dealing with lay-offs or the worry of being let go in the new year, the 2008 holiday season is turning out to be particularly stressful, which can lead to depression.

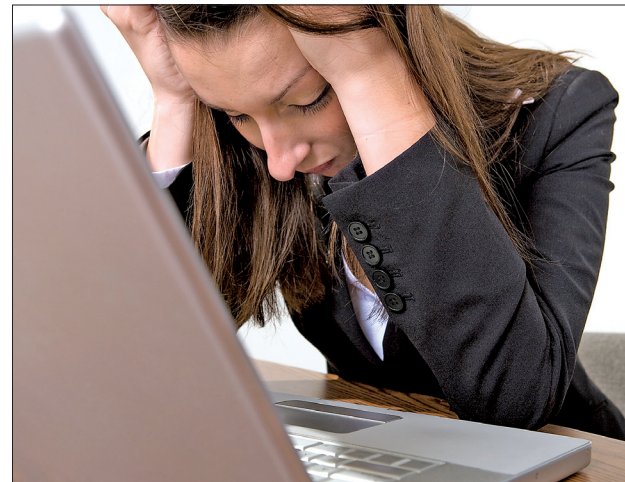
Kat Ivancic, 20, a customer service representative at a national bank in Vancouver, said everyone in her office is worried about losing their jobs in 2009, given the state of the economy.

She said while no one has been let go yet, the company is encouraging voluntary early retirement.

"I've seen some of my older co-workers cry over it," Ivancic said yesterday.

"(And customers) are coming in stressed out with financial crises, so customer service has got a lot harder ... I don't want to deal with (this) stuff, especially at Christmas."

Besides concerns over job stability, Canadians are also dealing with added workloads, low morale because of the cancellation of Christmas parties and



As the world economy tanks, the 2008 holiday season has Canadian workers stressed about job security, which can greatly affect people who are susceptible to depression.

METRO FEATURE

Seasonal Depression

bonuses, and the stress of having to tell family they've been let go.

To people who are susceptible to depression, these can all worsen their condition.

"Things that are out of our control affect our mental health," said Dr. Joti Samra, a registered clinical psychologist at Simon Fraser University.

"(The holidays) are one of the worst times of the year to be worried about finances."

Samra said the best way to cope with the financial stress is to be adaptable and keep your family in the loop.

"Take a good hard look at spending (as a family)," she said. "Identify what things are in your control and what things are not. It's still a family issue, and one person alone doesn't need to bear that responsibility."

Crisis centre seeing a sharp rise in callers

CHELSEA MIYA
for Metro Canada

The crisis help line at the Distress Centres of Toronto, one of the busiest in the country at roughly 120,000 callers a year, has seen a 22 per cent increase in calls about financial difficulties.

It's not bad weather blues but times of transition that hit people the hardest, said Karen Letofsky, the executive director.

And what worse time of transition than a recession?

Where to go for help

- Edmonton — Salvation Army Community and Family Centre (780) 429-0230, 24-hour
- Nationwide — Covenant

House: 1-800-999-9999, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
• Online — Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention www.casp-acps.ca

sion?

"We've seen more and more people calling about suicide," said Letofsky. "Depression, heightened anxiety, fear of failure, fear of the future, wishing they could escape everything that's happening around them."

Letofsky said the worst fallout is yet to come, as the realities of lost jobs and homes sinks in.

Within the next few months the intensity and frequency of calls related to the economy are expected to increase, she added.

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An Aeroflot flight from Athens to Moscow turned back in midair yesterday after receiving an anonymous bomb threat, but no explosives were found after police searched the plane. The Airbus A-319 carrying 49 passengers had been flying for around an hour when officials ordered it to turn back. **REUTERS**

World



Green Christmases more common

The odds of a "white Christmas" in temperate parts of the northern hemisphere have diminished in the last century and will likely decline further by 2100, experts said. Even though heavy snow this year will guarantee a white Christmas in many parts of Asia, Europe and North America, a 0.7 C rise in world temperatures since 1900 and projected bigger rises by 2100 suggest an inexorable trend. **REUTERS**

Russia plans military boost

Russia plans a massive increase in its weapons procurement for three years beginning in 2009, with 300 tanks, 14 warships and almost 50 airplanes on the shopping list, a senior government official said yesterday.

Vladislav Putilin, deputy head of the military-industrial commission, told journalists after a cabinet meeting the government planned to allocate 4 trillion roubles (\$141.5 bil-

lion) in 2009-11 to modernize its army.

The move comes after Russia's five-day war with Georgia, which exposed a Soviet-style army with obsolete equipment, poorly co-ordinated command, outdated communications and a lack of spy drones and high-precision bombs.

Putilin said that over the three-year period Russia's armed forces would receive more than 400 new types of weapons, includ-

Longer terms OK'd

- Russian parliament unanimously approved extending presidential terms yesterday, an amendment which has fuelled speculation that Vladimir Putin will return as head of state.

ing 48 aircraft, six spy drones, 60 helicopters, 14 warships, 300 tanks, and more than 2,000 auto vehicles. He did not specify

their types.

The Russian army ideally wants to be able to fight in three regional conflicts simultaneously. Analysts say that at the moment dealing with one enemy bigger than Georgia would be a serious problem.

Russia will continue to rely on its huge arsenal of nuclear weapons to safeguard its national security, and plans to buy 70 strategic nuclear missiles in 2009-11. **REUTERS**

Obama's green team set to bloom: Lobbyists

ENERGY U.S. president-elect Barack Obama's new "green dream team" is committed to battling climate change and ready to push for big policy reforms, in stark contrast to the Bush administration, environmental advocates said yesterday.

"If this team can't advance strong national policy on global warming, then no one can," said Kevin Knobloch, president

of the Union of Concerned Scientists.

Among Obama's picks are Nobel physics laureate Stephen Chu, who will head the Energy Department, and former environmental lawyer and U.S. Sen. Ken Salazar as Interior secretary.

Obama has pledged to create 5 million green jobs and invest \$150 billion in renewable energy over the next decade. **REUTERS**

Five convicted in U.S. army base attack plot

NEW JERSEY Five men were convicted yesterday of conspiracy to kill U.S. soldiers in a planned attack on an army base in New Jersey that prosecutors described as a bid to wage Islamist holy war against America.

The U.S. attorney said he would seek life sentences for the five defendants, who were also found not guilty on attempted murder charges.

Prosecutors had told the court the defendants were

inspired by al Qaeda and wanted to wage a holy war. Defence attorneys had argued that while the men talked the talk of militancy, they never intended to carry out the attack on Fort Dix army base. **REUTERS**

Spain Winning the big one



Monica Torras, an employee of a ticket office that sold part of the winning number of El Gordo ("the big one"), the world's richest lottery, sprays champagne at a lottery office in Barcelona yesterday. The prize of 2.3 billion euros (\$3.9 billion) is split into thousands of prizes among winners.

Pig who weathered quake receives honour

ANIMALS A pig that survived 36 days buried in the rubble of May's massive Sichuan earthquake has been voted China's favorite animal, but the attention has made him fat, lazy and bad-tempered, state media said.

The hog, trapped in a sty after the 7.9 magnitude quake, was bought by a local businessman who was moved by its ordeal, and named "Zhu Jianqiang," or Strong Pig. It survived by



Zhu Jianqiang, recently voted China's favourite animal.

eating charcoal and drinking rainwater.

It has been voted top of an online poll of animals

"who moved China" this year, the China Daily said. People come from all over to see the pig at its new home in a museum, the newspaper said, but it was becoming increasingly spoiled and ungrateful.

Other top animals included a dog that guarded its elderly owner when he was sick and accompanied him to hospital, and a cat that almost died of grief when its partner was run over by a car. **REUTERS**

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News in brief

INDIA Police began a probe yesterday into reports that villagers in a tribal area of central India beat 50 women with sticks after accusing them of witchcraft, and cut off their hair. The villagers acted on the advice of a local spiritual man,

who said the assault would protect them from evil spirits, in a forest in a poor district of Chhattisgarh state.

PAKISTAN Suspected U.S. drones fired at least two missiles into Pakistan's South Waziristan region yesterday,

killing seven people, officials said. U.S. forces in Afghanistan, frustrated by a spreading Taliban insurgency that is getting support from militant enclaves in northwest Pakistan, have stepped up strikes by pilotless drones. **REUTERS**

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Comment

'08 as ugly as they come

NationalReport



As years go, they don't get much uglier than 2008. The economy started on a long and likely brutal plunge. The never-ending war in Afghanistan showed no signs of closure. We had yet another election which was dispiriting in almost every sense.

In this 21st-century version of open democracy, we had the Governor General make a critical call on our political future without a word of explanation for her decision. We had a Conservative government, which normally stands broad-shouldered against deficits,

usher in a period of deficits.

We had a government which stands for high ethics and transparency give us the Cadman affair, NAFTAgate, Maxime Bernier and Boobgate, the in and out affair, the shutting down of Parliament and election campaign ads featuring defecating birds.

Despite the Conservatives' repeated attempts at self-destruction, we had an opposition party so feeble that it actually lost ground against them. The Liberal leader hit new lows on the hapless meter, showing himself even incapable of producing a nationally televised video of himself that was in focus.

It was supposed to be the year in which we addressed the pressing matter of global warming. By year's end, green was pretty much forgotten and we'd moved on to other bruise-like colours.

We had a celebrated war general, Rick Hillier, who de-

The year featured a prime minister more interested in playing political poker than in showing inspirational leadership.

cided, just at the moment he was perhaps most needed, to call it a day. This not-so-old general faded away for no good reason and enthusiasm for our men and women in arms faded as well.

The year featured a prime minister more interested in playing political poker than in showing inspirational leadership on the major issues of our times. Stephen Harper closed down Parliament twice, once claiming it was dysfunctional when in fact he had gotten his way in the Commons almost every time. A second bolting of the doors came when Parliament threat-

ened to dysfunction him, forcing the PM to rush off to Rideau Hall to beg for salvation.

The fiasco that was the government's economic statement typified our year in the dumps. Here we were, on the edge of a global economic meltdown, and the finance minister could do nothing better than play cheap politics with it, bringing forward a policy which threatened to starve opposing parties of financing. That in turn somehow led to a spectacularly unedifying east-versus-west debate about separatists at the gates.

It was a suitably depressing capper to a relentlessly depressing political year.

In the nation's capital, the one good thing about '08 is that '09 can hardly get worse.

Lawrence Martin is a Globe and Mail correspondent and author who writes about national affairs from Ottawa.

YOU MUST WORK IN THE AUTO SECTOR.



MICHAEL DE ADDER

Views

'Powerful' message from Zambia



Tanya Kim

I returned from my first trip to Zambia recently. Taking time from my hosting duties with CTV's eTalk, I had the honour and privilege of working with CARE Canada. This non-profit organization launched the I Am Powerful campaign, which is committed to empowering women in the fight against global poverty.

In the communities we visited, I saw that with the right tools and training, combined with hard work and determination, women are able to lift themselves, their families and their communities out of complete depths of despair and poverty.

On my journey, I met extraordinary Zambian women who define what it means to

be powerful. They are strong, humble and exhibit fierce resilience in situations where they could easily be defeated. They showed me what it means to be a part of a community. From village to village, I saw women working together in support of each other — from building dams, to farming their gardens, to feeding malnourished children ... I feel so blessed to have experienced why the I Am Powerful initiative exists.

There is so much joy, so much pure beauty in Zambia! With so many negative images of extreme poverty associated with Africa, I am thankful that I was able to encounter a more hopeful view. In so many of the villages, we were greeted with welcome songs. The universal language of smile and song was always present, and although I was miles away from home, I felt accepted as a dear friend.



eTalk host Tanya Kim with her Zambian friends.

My goal in working with CARE on this adventure was to bring hope and inspiration to the people I met in Zambia. But instead, it was I who was filled with hope and inspiration after being so warmly welcomed into the lives and hearts of so many. The journey reminded me of the power that strength, hard work, and determination can have on

making my life better.

One of the most touching moments for me was during a visit to a gardening collective. The women proudly showed me the rows of maize, potatoes and onions they were growing, and danced with joy at sharing the results of their hard work. The group sells the produce, pouring all of the profits back into helping their communities.

I left Zambia with a renewed sense of the importance of passion for your work and compassion for others. I am so fortunate to have a career I love, close family and friends, and I am reinvigorated to continue working to help the people around me. We all have a role to play in the fight against poverty. Every little bit helps in making a difference.

Tanya Kim is the host of eTalk and one of Canada's leading authorities on music and popular culture.

Letters

Decision to bail out Big Three appalling

I am writing as a concerned Canadian who is appalled by the decision to bail out the Big Three in Canada and the U.S.

I understand the role these companies play in providing jobs, and therefore their role in the greater economy. But I feel it is unjust to support them by taking from the pockets of working Canadians.

Free-market capitalism, as I understand it, dictates that producers must supply a product to the market that meets a demand, thereby securing profit and allowing said producers to remain in the marketplace, independent of government intervention. This is the same fiscal model the Conservative government of Canada endorses as a justification for the failure to address rampant homelessness, poverty and ecological irresponsibility.

Perhaps the government should, rather than handing out taxpayers' money, suggest that the Big Three work toward developing more affordable, sustainable and marketable products.

If not, perhaps it should

admit that these "bailout packages" are in fact a move toward market socialism and work to diminish the widening gap between the rich and poor in this country.

RUSSELL MCGEE, EDMONTON

Give women a better shot at contributing to politics

Recent letters have expressed a sense of pride that more women are becoming involved in Canadian political discussions.

As a young, female recent political science undergraduate, I would like to suggest that maybe it is not that female Canadians are uninterested in politics, but maybe those who are interested do not feel they are offered a fair chance to contribute.

I believe senior level Canadian government roles are mainly held by male employees — causing women to feel stifled and ignored when it comes to government discussions. Just as the boys would dominate the field in gym class, I feel men have dominated the House. If you gave us more of a chance to hold the ball, maybe we could have more of a chance to score.

AMINI KHANNA, TORONTO

It's your turn to tell others what you think. E-mail your thoughts and opinions to: edmontonletters@metronews.ca

Letters must include sender's full name, address and phone number — street name and phone numbers will NOT be published. We reserve the right to edit letters.

Moscow to oversee signing of 'gas OPEC' charter

Russia will oversee the creation of a more formal group of gas-exporting states today amid Moscow's clash with Kiev over gas. **REUTERS**

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Business

EDITOR: FERMIN DESOUZA, FERMIN.DESOUZA@METRONEWS.CA

Consumer confidence drops to 27-year low

Consumer confidence in Canada dropped for a third consecutive month in December, hitting a 27-year low as a "psychology of recession" tightened its grip on Canadians, the Conference Board of Canada said yesterday.

The index in December fell to 67.7 from 71 in November, the lowest mark since the 63 recorded during the recession of 1981-82. The index was 100 in 2002.

"Consumers continue to be gloomy about their financial situation, indicating that they are financial-

"Consumers continue to be gloomy ... indicating that they are financially worse off today than they were six months ago."

Glen Hodgson

ly worse off today than they were six months ago. Similarly, they expect to be worse off six months from now," Conference Board chief economist Glen Hodgson said.

He also said the board was revising its forecast for 2009 and would most likely come out with a gloomier set of figures early in the new year.

The Conference Board last week said Canada needed a stimulus package of at least one per cent of gross domestic product, a figure Hodgson said was equivalent to a sum between \$10 billion and \$13 billion.

The only bright spot was that a slightly larger number of consumers said now was the time to make major purchases. **REUTERS**



A Toyota Motor Corp.'s car is reflected in a window of a Toyota showroom in Yokohama, south of Tokyo, yesterday.

Toyota sees first operating loss

AUTOS Toyota Motor Corp., the world's biggest automaker, yesterday forecast its first ever group operating loss due to a relentless global slide in car sales and a crippling rise in the yen.

Toyota had been expected to issue its second profit warning in less than seven weeks, after domestic rival

Honda Motor Co. also took the rare step of altering its guidance outside the usual quarterly reporting season, but the downward revision was bigger than predicted.

Toyota cut its group operating forecast to a loss of 150 billion yen (\$1.7 billion US) for the year to end-March. This came after the company slashed its group

operating profit forecast last month by one trillion yen to 600 billion yen.

Toyota has idled factories, slowed assembly lines and delayed manufacturing projects, such as the start of a new Mississippi plant under construction to build the Prius hybrid model.

REUTERS

Business in brief

OIL Shares in oil drilling firm Grey Wolf Inc. fell by more than half yesterday, reflecting a drop in the price of units of buyer Precision Drilling Trust, which expects to close a cash-and-shares takeover of Grey Wolf today. Grey Wolf's shares dropped by \$3.27, or 51 per

cent, to \$3.09 at midafternoon on the American Stock Exchange.

BEEF The European Union launched a case at the World Trade Organization yesterday to test whether its restrictions on beef treated with growth

hormones comply with global trade rules. The EU has banned growth-promoting hormones and imports of hormone-treated meat since the early 1980s, but this ban has long been challenged by the United States and Canada.

REUTERS

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Increase income:

Look for opportunities to increase your income. Ask for a raise, another position or more work (pay as well) at your current job. Second jobs can do wonders. It's more interesting than a couch potato.

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MoneyMatters

Henry Choo Chong

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have temptations? Why pay interest on some cards at 12 per cent and others at 28 per cent? Get rid of the higher interest cards. Reduce bank charges on your bank accounts. Who needs a chequing, savings, chequing-savings, high interest savings, low fee chequing accounts? One or two are all you need.

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Arrange pre-authorized deposits directly from your pay. What you don't get, you won't miss.

Invest on a regular basis:

Don't just invest when the stock market is booming.

Begin with one goal before doing another, but start!

Reach Henry Choo Chong, CGA, at choochonghcg@yahoo.ca.

'Tis the season to give back

SmartCookies



By now you've probably done your fair share of dodging crowds at the mall and most likely made the majority of your obligatory party rounds — gaining a pound or two in the process!

And as your thoughts turn to how you are going to complete the holiday shopping in time, it's important to take a time out to consider helping those less fortunate. We've compiled a list of ways that you and your family can give back this holiday season without taking up too much time or money.

Time:

Donating your time to a cause is an incredibly generous way to give. Choose an organization that is important to you and would be in need of volunteers. Maybe you have a charity that you think would be a good fit.

Skills:

Just like we suggest you use your skills and experience to barter for products or services, you can also use your skills and services to give back. Some of us use our marketing/PR skills to give back to local organizations like Feed the Need and Quest. Consider a skill that you have that would be helpful to a charitable organization. Anything from working on an organization's website, to writing newsletters, recruiting volunteers or organizing fundraising activities would be appreciated.

Items:

At this time of year many charities prefer unwrapped gifts and food donations. However there are a number of organizations that will take everything



Contact your local shelters to find out what they need the most during the holidays.

If our wallets are feeling the pinch then you can be certain all of the organizations that assist others are also feeling it. Every little bit counts for families in need this season.

from gently used clothing items to household items, blankets, etc. Contact your local shelters to find out what they need the most during the holidays.

Money:

When donating money to a charity, make sure they are a trustworthy and well managed organiza-

tion so you are able to give confidently. You want to ensure your hard earned and generous donation is going towards the right thing. It's a great idea to contact the organization of interest and ask about how donated money is allocated and what the short and long terms goals are of the organization. It's also a great idea to confirm how much money you need to donate in order to receive a tax receipt.

If our wallets are feeling the pinch then you can be certain all of the organizations that assist others are also feeling it. Every little bit counts for families in need this season.

For a list of local charities in your area check out charity.com

Happy Giving and Happy Holidays!

Contact us at smartcookies@metronews.ca. For more tips for saving and giving back, check out Smart Cookies Guide to Making More Dough, available in bookstores.

Tune in Wednesday night at 9 p.m. EST/PST on the W Network and be sure to visit smartcookies.com for more tips.

Investing

Allan Small

The week's column investigates whether it's a good time to buy gold. Visit metronews.ca

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Eriksson leads NHL's Three Stars

NHL Dallas Stars left wing Loui Eriksson, Philadelphia Flyers centre Jeff Carter and New Jersey Devils left wing Patrik Elias were named the NHL's Three Stars for the week ending Dec. 21.

Eriksson scored an NHL-leading six goals in three games last week, helping the Stars earn five of six possible points.

Yankees, Wang agree to terms

MLB The New York Yankees and starting pitcher Chien-Ming Wang agreed to a one-year, \$5 million US contract yesterday, avoiding arbitration.

Following back-to-back 19-win campaigns, the Taiwanese-born Wang went 8-2 with a 4.07 earned-run average in 15 starts in 2008 before being placed on the disabled list with a foot injury in June.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Oilers tame the Coyotes

NHL RESULT

Oilers 4 Coyotes 2



THE SKINNY: Sheldon Souray's power-play goal in the first minute of the third period stood as the winner as the Oilers snapped a three-game losing streak to hit the Christmas break at 15-14-3.

THE QUOTE: "We stuck with it," said Souray, who notched his ninth goal of the season on a two-man advantage. "Our power play came through and that helped our cause. We stayed positive."

THE BIG PLAY: It was 2-2 when Viktor Tikhonov took a four-minute minor for high-sticking Erik Cole to put the Oilers on a 5-on-3 advantage. Enter Souray, who took a pass from Lubomir Visnovsky and



The Oilers celebrate Zach Stortini's goal during the first period of last night's game against the Phoenix Coyotes at Rexall Place. The Oilers defeated the Coyotes 4-2.

blazed a slapshot past Mikael Tellqvist for a 3-2 lead at 45 seconds.

DOGS BITE BACK: Down 2-0 after 20 minutes, the Coyotes outshot the Oilers 17-

5 in the second period and pulled even as Martin Hanzal and Enver Lisin, on a power play, put pucks behind Dwayne Roloson.

ON THE HOP: Zack Stortini

jumpstarted the Oilers on his first shift. First, he starched Todd Fedoruk with a wicked open-ice hit, then he made it 1-0 in a goal-crease scramble with his first goal of the season at 4:26.

MILESTONE: Captain Ethan Moreau played his 532nd game with the Oilers in this one, tying him with Hall-of-Famer Paul Coffey for 15th place in career games played with Edmonton.

TAKE A SEAT: After being benched for the third period of Friday's 3-2 shootout loss to Anaheim, Robert Nilsson was a healthy scratch. Liam Reddick took his place in the lineup, playing alongside Sam Gagner and Cole.

THE NEXT GAME: The Oilers travel to Vancouver to face the Canucks at GM Place on Friday.

ROBIN BROWNLEE/
FOR METRO EDMONTON

Questions raised over Yi's age

NBA A media report carrying school photographs and an identification card has raised doubts about Chinese NBA player Yi



Yi Jianlian

Jianlian's age, less than two weeks after 26 local players were found to have falsified birth dates. New Jersey Nets forward Yi, China's fourth NBA player, is officially 21, but a cloud of suspicion surrounded his age before he was picked sixth by Milwaukee Bucks in the 2007 NBA draft.

Yi has consistently refused to answer questions about his age. Suspicion of age fraud has long been a hallmark of China's state-run sports system.

REUTERS

Canadian GM flies Falcons to surprise playoff spot

High atop the list of most excellent executives in the NFL this year — right up there alongside legendary league luminary **Bill Parcells** — is a former University of Guelph student who once served as a not-so-glorified gopher for the Saskatchewan Roughriders.

Were it not for the worst-to-first ascent of Parcells' Miami Dolphins, in fact, **Thomas Dimitroff** would be a shoo-in as the NFL's top exec of 2008.

Last January, Dimitroff accepted an offer to become

YorkReport

Marty York

marty.york@metronews.ca

Atlanta Falcons general manager, a position several established NFLers flat-out rejected. The reason was that the Falcons were dogged — you should pardon the expression — by unprecedented nightmares last year. They were 4-12.

Their franchise quarter-

back — **Michael Vick** — was jailed because of his role in a dogfighting ring.

Their coach, **Bob Petrino**, quit after 13 games to return to college football.

Desperate, owner **Arthur Blank** turned to Dimitroff, who was scouting for the New England Patriots. Dimitroff hired Jacksonville Jaguars defensive co-ordinator **Mike Smith** as coach, acquired running back **Michael Turner** as a free agent and chose quarterback **Matt Ryan** third overall in the NFL draft.

All three flourished and, on Sunday, the Falcons

qualified for the post-season.

"Never thought this could happen this year, never," Blank told Metro on Sunday after Atlanta's playoff-clinching triumph in Minnesota. "This is the season of miracles, thanks to Thomas."

Those of us who followed the CFL closely in the late 1990s knew Dimitroff as a poorly paid (about \$16,000 a year) front-office employee in Saskatchewan.

After an ordinary stint as a defensive halfback at Guelph, he joined the Riders for odd jobs, ranging

from ticket sales to promotions. Football was in his blood. His father was a football lifer. **Tom Dimitroff** coached and scouted in the CFL and NFL before dying of kidney cancer in 1996.

The junior Dimitroff grew up in Ontario as his dad coached in Ottawa and Hamilton. Tom Sr. continually advised his son to chase his GM dreams by paying his dues. Thus, Thomas did the Ordinary Joe Jobs in Saskatchewan, the World League of American Football, a Japanese league and then in Cleveland, where he spent much of his time lit-

erally painting the Browns' football field.

At 42, Dimitroff is through with behind-the-scenes work in football. He's front and centre in Atlanta, toast of the town, architect of an awfully surprising playoff team.

"I gave Thomas years to rebuild our team," Blank said. "And he did it in months. He's a special guy."

"We're very proud of him. Canada should be proud of him, too."

Marty York has been a groundbreaking sports columnist and broadcaster in Canada for decades.

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Health & Beauty

EDITOR: ANN-MARIE COLACINO, ANN-MARIE.COLACINO@METRONEWS.CA

Money doesn't buy happiness

Study finds the people crave a sense of purpose

CELIA MILNE
for Metro Canada

Next time someone in an expensive SUV cuts you off, take solace in this: Money can buy fancy cars, but it can't buy happiness.

Researchers at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MD studied happiness from a scientific perspective, including its genetic, psychological, sociological and biological underpinnings.

They found that it's not the almighty dollar that makes people happy, but rather a sense of purpose. This may be a good message to remember as we head into the holidays dur-

ing a tough recession, when many have less spending money. Although living in abject poverty is not conducive to happiness, once you have the basic things you need in life, higher levels of income don't increase happiness.

Happiness can be measured — but not bought, scientists reported in the December issue of Mayo Clinic Women's HealthSource.

Your age and stage of life also have an effect on hap-

piness. Middle age is a particularly stressful time of life, according to a study of about two million people in almost 80 countries. Mental distress peaks for women at around 40 and for men at around 50. Later in life, in your '60s and '70s, you tend to be more content. (Perhaps because the kids with their clutter have moved away?)

Social connectedness is another factor that increases happiness. This may help explain why women,

on the whole, are happier than men. While women tend to join clubs, classes, and social groups, men — especially older men — often allow themselves to become socially isolated. Although they may not initially realize it, this ultimately makes men less happy than women.

Life circumstances cannot be ignored in measuring happiness: Events that occur — good or bad — definitely have an effect on well-being, but some people are quite resilient even in the face of negative circumstances.

Genes play a role here, perhaps even accounting for as much as half of individual differences in well-



Happiness can be measured — but not bought, scientists reported in the December issue of Mayo Clinic Women's HealthSource.

being. Thinking positively, or seeing the world through rose-coloured glasses, may be largely genetic. Optimistic people tend to live longer.

Gaining more education

boosts happiness, probably because it provides more choices in life. Not surprisingly, so does excellent health. Health and happiness are closely tied to each other.

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When innocence goes up for sale

The J Spot

Josey Vogels

Sex talk with Josey

You have to wonder how Mary got everyone to believe she was a pregnant virgin. Sure, that whole Immaculate Conception was a pretty clever ruse but Joseph had to be at least a little suspicious on their wedding night.

I wondered the same thing when I heard guys were bidding millions to be 22-year-old San Diego-based Natalie Dylan's first. Earlier this fall, Dylan (not her real name) auctioned off her virginity to the highest bidder in order to help pay for graduate school to become a marriage and family therapist. Bids came in from over 5,000 men and ranged from \$1 to \$3.8 million.

If I'm spending that kind of dough, I'd want proof.

But, the fact is, there's really no way to prove whether or not a girl has done it. The most popular idea that an intact hymen is proof of her virginity is completely false, says Hanne Blank, American historian and author of Virgin:

The Untouched History. Hymens run the gamut, says Blank, from thick and resilient to thin and fragile, making them easy to break in myriad of ways and therefore lousy indicators of whether a young woman has had intercourse yet or not.

In fact, medical research isn't really sure why women even have a hymen. Some research suggests that it is simply vestigial tissue, that is tissue that possibly once had a function in a different evolutionary stage but has since become redundant, much like our appendix.

Unfortunately, says Blank, they found a use for it when men become landowners and they needed to know who their kids were so they could hand down their property (known as the paternity-property hypothesis in biology and anthropology circles). The easiest way to do this was to marry a verified virgin. And proving that this flimsy bit of membrane was still intact seemed a plausible enough method of verification.

Except, as mentioned, given its flimsy nature, the state of a woman's hymen is a lousy way to "prove" virginity. As result, people have come up with all kinds of ways to create this "proof," like inserting a vial



Saving your virginity until marriage is a personal choice.

of pig's blood in the young woman's vagina on her wedding night so it would burst and stain the sheets or undergoing hymen restoration surgery, increasingly popular among mostly Muslim immigrants in Europe who want to have their virginity "restored" for marriage.

Saving your virginity until marriage is a personal choice made for health, moral and/or religious reasons. Fine. But undergoing surgery to "restore" your virginity or spending millions for a one-night stand with a virgin seems like a high price to pay for something you can't even prove. In the business world, this would be considered a really bad investment.

Josey Vogels is a sex and relationship columnist and author of five books on the subjects. For more info, visit joseyvogels.com.

Madagascar 2 dominates foreign box offices

Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa hurdled to the forefront of the foreign box office with weekend sales of \$33.5 million from 56 territories. The animated film opened in 10 markets and was welcomed in the No. 1 spot by Italy and Australia, as well as Hong Kong and New Zealand. **REUTERS**

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Entertainment

EDITOR: DEAN LISK, DEAN.LISK@METRONEWS.CA

**Hyped hair**

Say good-bye to Robert Pattinson's sexy tousled locks. The Twilight star caused a major frenzy when he stepped out this weekend with a new crew cut. **PEOPLE.COM**

Mockingbird director Mulligan dies at 83

DEATH Robert Mulligan, who received an Oscar nomination for directing *To Kill a Mockingbird*, died Friday of heart disease at his Connecticut home. He was 83.

Known for his diffident nature and sensitivity toward players, Mulligan directed five different actors in Oscar-nominated performances: Gregory Peck and Mary Badham in *Mockingbird*, Natalie Wood (*Love with the Proper Stranger*), Ruth Gordon (*Inside Daisy Clover*) and Ellen Burstyn (*Same Time, Next Year*). Peck won the Oscar for his lead role as attorney Atticus Finch in *Mockingbird*.

He also elicited consistently fine performances from a range of his players,

including Anthony Perkins in *Fear Strikes Out*, Jennifer O'Neill in *Summer of '42*, Robert Redford in *Inside Daisy Clover* and Richard Gere in *Blood- brothers*.

Self-effacing with a non-flamboyant filmic style, Mulligan didn't receive the acclaim of such contemporaries as Sidney Lumet, Arthur Penn and John Frankenheimer. His films were more popular with audiences than with critics.

Some debated whether he had a personal vision in his films or particular "style," but he himself was dismissive: "I don't know anything about 'the Mulligan style,'" he told the *Village Voice* in 1978. "If you can find it, well, that's your job." **REUTERS**

Cate ages with grace in *Button*

If movie fans didn't know she was co-starring with Brad Pitt in *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*, they wouldn't recognize Cate Blanchett when the film opens with a close-up of her in a hospital bed, as a withered old woman.

The 39-year-old Australian actress, an Academy Award winner for her 2004 portrait of Katharine Hepburn (*The Aviator*) and a two-time Oscar nominee last year as Queen Elizabeth (*Elizabeth: The Golden Age*) and Bob Dylan (*I'm Not There*), disappears into another challenging role in *Benjamin Button*, which opens Christmas Day.

She undergoes a striking transformation as the life of her character, Daisy, unfolds over eight decades, blossoming from a sprightly girl into a beautiful bal-



Cate Blanchett drew from her own experiences to carry herself from girlhood to old age in *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*.

let dancer, then growing old while the love of her life inexplicably gets younger.

Blanchett says much of the credit for her metamorphosis goes to the "unbelievable" talent of make-up artists.

But the actress says her own performance was informed largely by experiences from her youth — from childhood ballet lessons, to a close relationship with her grandmother and to her first job, at 14, serving meals in an old-

age home.

"I would go in after school ... and the cook would have prepared the meal, and I had to dish it all up and take it around to the guys, have a little chat with them ... and I'd have to clean up after them and put everything away," she recounted in a recent interview.

In a memory that seemed to come straight from the movie, she recalled one of the home's matrons expressing consternation at having a patient move in to take the place of newly deceased resident so quickly that "the bed's still warm."

"For a 14-year-old to hear that, you think, 'Wow. That person's gone and someone else has come in?' Life really is a car park," she said. **REUTERS**

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Thought you had heard the last of the Olympics until 2010? Think again. On Saturday, NBC will broadcast Beijing Olympics Opening Ceremony: TV Event of the Year, a two-hour special hosted by Bob Costas and Matt Lauer, according to The Hollywood Reporter. **TVGUIDE.COM**

In brief

WEREVOLVES Talk about a hairy Sex and the City. The Fox network has ordered a script for Bitches, a comedy-drama about a quartet of female friends in New York who are werewolves. The project, described as a quirky urban fairy tale, hails from feature writer Michael Dougherty, who wrote the recent werewolf horror flick Trick 'r Treat.

REUTERS

IntelVision

Rick McGinnis



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Vanishing acts

Shows stuck in television twilight zone

Most TV shows exit the airwaves with a flurry of headlines memorializing their demise. Sometimes, though, a program fades from the spotlight into a scheduling twilight zone: Neither declared dead nor returning.

Here's the lowdown on some missing-in-action titles from this year that most expected to see again but which have no airdates on the horizon:

NBC'S AMERICAN GLADIATORS: Gladiators ready? No, gladiators are not ready. This competition-series revival enjoyed terrific ratings for its initial run during the Hollywood writers strike early this year. A second season launched in May and suffered a sharp drop in viewers, with ratings fading throughout its summer run. Most consider reality shows cheap to produce, but this stunt-heavy arena competition is not. NBC has not mentioned Gladiators on the

record, but it's considered cancelled.

FOX'S THE MOMENT OF TRUTH: Another strike-era reality hit, this, too, saw a ratings decline during its summer run. Unlike Gladiators, though, Truth isn't very expensive, and Fox has shot unaired episodes for a new season. Given the troubled economy and the show's controversial content, sources said garnering advertiser support hasn't been easy. No air-date is planned for Truth, but with episodes in the can, a summer run might be tempting.

CBS' ELITEXC SATURDAY NIGHT FIGHTS: CBS planned four experimental off-brand specials and aired three, two of which performed well among younger demographics. With EliteXC declaring bankruptcy in October, though, the fourth special is not happening. CBS could align with another mixed-martial-arts partner

but has not found or sought one.

ABC'S OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS: This game show debuted in the fall and quickly was yanked from the schedule. ABC's insistence that the program might come back was presumed by the media to be spin to avoid cancellation so early in the season. But here we are, months later, and ABC still says Opportunity will knock again. The network plans to run off the remaining six episodes in the summer.

FOX'S 'TIL DEATH AND ABC'S ACCORDING TO JIM: Both are modestly rated, critically indifferent sitcoms produced by their networks' sister studios that fill schedule holes when needed. Death is off the air, but a midseason appearance is likely. Jim will leave the air shortly, and ABC plans to air its remaining 12 episodes in the summer unless called into action earlier.

REUTERS

Matthews mulling return to Hardball

SHOW MSNBC may find out soon whether Hardball host Chris Matthews returns to the invigorated channel.

Matthews, 63, is said to be considering an offer from NBC to remain as host of Hardball, a job he's held for more than a decade, or to return to his native Pennsylvania to run for the U.S. Senate against GOP incumbent Arlen Specter.

There are indications that a decision could come soon, sometime before Inaugural Day on Jan. 20. But MSNBC president Phil Griffin de-



Chris Matthews

clined late last week to say whether that's true.

"I've talked to Chris. I think he's going to be here for a long time," Griffin said. "I want him to be here for a long time." Griffin said that there would be "clarity" soon.

Matthews, who is believed to make roughly \$5 million a year, declined an interview, according to a spokesman.

REUTERS

Pollan lands mom role in film

PEOPLE Tracy Pollan, best known for playing the love interest of now real-life husband Michael J. Fox's character on Family Ties, will star in a Lifetime Movie Network film about missing teenager Natalee Holloway.

Holloway disappeared while on a class trip to Aruba in 2005. The case remains unsolved.

The Natalee Holloway Sto-

ry (tentative title) is based on the book Loving Natalee: A Mother's Testament of Hope and Faith, by Holloway's mother, Beth Twitty. Pollan will play Twitty. Production is set to begin next month for an April premiere.

In 2000, Pollan received an Emmy nomination for her guest-starring role on NBC's Law & Order: SVU.

REUTERS

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DVD picks

The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor

Director: Rob Cohen

Rating: PG-13

SEVEN LONG YEARS after this irredeemable action series last busted our block, a third instalment of The Mummy arrives to demonstrate just how badly CGI and fan loyalty can be abused. Rachel Weisz, whose lively banter with co-star Brendan Fraser helped relieve the tedium of digital cadavers, took a pass on this quick-buck exercise. Also missing in action is Stephen Sommers, director of the first two films. His limitations seem positively trivial compared to the awesome hackitude of his successor Rob Cohen. Then there's the matter of the missing mummy. The fearsome undead Imhotep has been replaced by digitized Chinese terracotta warriors

led by Jet Li's ceramic-chewing cameo of a fascist emperor.

Burn After Reading

Directors: Joel, Ethan Coen

Rating: R

YOU FORGIVE THE SILLY PLOT of this screwball spy comedy from Joel and Ethan Coen because of the adroitness of the character interaction and wordplay. It's their best laughter in a decade, cynically observing the "idiotcy of today" in a paranoid and litigious Washington, D.C., where spooks tangle with angry spouses and grasping fitness-centre employees. It could make you feel sorry for the people tasked with the seemingly hopeless job of maintaining homeland security: "Now it seems like it's all bureaucracy and no mission," a character ruefully observes. John Malkovich is the linchpin of an A-list circus that includes George Clooney, Brad Pitt, Tilda Swinton, Frances McDormand and J.K. Simmons, all in top form.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Metal band laid to rest in boxed set

PEOPLE

Assembling the White Zombie boxed set Let Sleeping Corpses Lie was "weird" and somewhat bittersweet for Rob Zombie, the frontman for the defunct metal group that broke up in 1996.

"The funny thing was when I was putting it together, it seemed so long ago," Zombie told Billboard.com. "It felt like I was putting together a box set of someone else's band. It just seemed like forever ago."

The Geffen Records set, which boasts four CDs and one DVD, came out on Nov. 26. Zombie, whose real name is Rob Cummings, said gathering the 63 tracks and a wealth of rare video footage "brought up a lot of things I'd forgotten about — unfortunately, some of it was negative."

He was particularly reminded of the waning days of the band, when the group members would not see each other except at shows. None of the other band members were involved in the set.

REUTERS

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sports	47	SPEED	417 406	Super Bikes!	Super Bikes!	Hot Import	Hot Import	Pinks	Pass Time	Low Life	Low Life	Super Bikes!
	94	SCORE	410 403	(5:30) Court Surfing	Score Tonight		Hardcore Hockey Talk		Final Score	Final Score		Final Score
	9	EDACC	267 351	Help TV		The Mentalist (HDTV)	Chasing Christmas (2005, Drama) Tom Arnold.					Help TV
	14	YTV	552 543	Charlie Brown	Flint Christmas	Red-Nosed Reindeer	Malcolm-Mid.	Fresh Prince	Fries That?	Mystery Hnt.		Martin Mystery
	17	TREE	553 546	Backyardigans	Maggie-Beast	Comfy Couch	Rolie Polie Olie	Beren. Bears	Babar	Backyardigans		Dora-Explorer
	42	TOON	555 545	(6:30) A Dennis the Menace Christmas			Gotta Catch Santa Claus		Stardust			Futurama
	45	FAM	557 541	Zoey 101	Life Derek	Wizards-Place	That's-Raven	Zack & Cody	Natural-Sadie	Han. Montana	Life Derek	Ned's School
	-	TVA	121 714	TVA 18 heures	Les Gags	Devine qui ** (2005, Comédie) Bernie Mac, Zoe Saldana.			Musicographie René Angélil.			TVA 22 heures
	18	CMT	575 583	Reba	Reba	Three Wishes	Live & Up Front: Doc Walker		Home Improve.	Home Improve.		Reba
	25	A&E	615 520	The First 48 (HDTV)	Manhunters	Manhunters	Runaway	Jacked: Theft	The First 48 (HDTV)			The First 48
family	26	MMM	571 581	Celine Dion: Woman	Celebrity Wrestling		Tommy Lee	Tommy Lee	Don't Forget the Lyrics!			Party of Five
	29	FOOD	603 561	The F Word	Chef School	At the Table	Restaurant Makeover		Unwrapped			The F Word
	31	SHOW	617 522	EastEnders	Vivienne Vyle	Recipe for a Perfect Christmas (2005, Romance-Comedy)			Testees	Trailer Park		House
	32	DISC	520 505	Destroyed	Destroyed	Dirty Jobs Turkey farm.	Daily Planet		Destroyed	Destroyed		Dirty Jobs
	33	SLICE	601 562	Rich Bride, Poor Bride	End of Leash	End of Leash	ET Canada	Matchmaker	Date My Ex: Jo & Slade			Trading Sp
	34	W	602 567	(6) Stolen Miracle (2001)	Friends	Will & Grace	Shopping Bags	Shopping Bags	Crazy for Christmas (2005, Drama)			
	35	TLC	521 560	Mystery Diagnosis	Dr. G: Medical Examiner		World's Heaviest Man		Mystery Diagnosis			Med. Examiner
	36	BRAVO	620 523	Come Into the Parlour	Tell It On The Mountain		Law & Order "Standoff"		Without a Trace			Tao of Steve
	38	SPIKE	628 584	UFC Unleashed	UFC Unleashed		MANswers	MANswers	Tenacious D: Masterworks 2			Trek: Voyager
	40	HIST	522 506	Ax Men "Black Friday"	NCIS "Light Sleeper"		Crime Stories		Ax Men "Black Friday"			Worst Jobs
cable variety	41	COM	626 547	Laughs	Comedy Now	Air Farce	Just for Laughs		Corner Gas	The Simpsons	South Park	S. Silverman
	43	SPACE	627 528	The Dresden Files	Zombieman		Stargate SG-1		Lost			Deep Space 9
	44	WPCH	294 650	(6) The Mighty Ducks (1992)	Cheers	Seinfeld	Family Guy	Family Guy	The Mighty Ducks ** (1992, Comedy)			
	46	OLN	411 457	Mantracker	Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Survivorman		Mantracker			Bounty Hunter
	48	TROP	619 525	Planet Soap	Big Screen	Beverly Hills, 90210	Planet Soap	What Happen?	Family Guy	Seinfeld		Seinfeld
	50	STAR	621 527	Look-A-Like	Off the Leash	The Tonight Show-Jay Leno	TMZ	Sarah	The View (HDTV)			Off the Leash
	52	HGTV	600 564	Sarah's House	Design Inc.	Colin & Justin's Home Heist	Holmes on Homes		Sarah's House	Design Inc.		Pure Design
	65	TLN	700 800	Nati Ieri	Raymond	Raymond	George Lopez	George Lopez	The Sopranos (SS)			David Rocco
	92	APTN	269 350	Wings-Canada	Great Towns	Wapos Bay	Kidz in the Wood (1996, Comedy) Dave Thomas, Julia Duffy.					Respect
	93	VISION	261 394	The Man Who Saved Christmas (2002, Docudrama)			Origins of Christmas		The Man Who Saved Christmas (2002)			
cable variety	100	MTV	581 566	A Double Shot of Love	A Double Shot of Love (N)		MTV Live	After	Next	Mom & Dad		Double Shot
	101	MM	570 580	Punk'd	Punk'd	Punk'd	Punk'd	Punk'd	Much Comes Clean			MuchOnDem
	102	CPAC	512 396	(6:30) Headline Politics	Revue		Question Period		Prime-Politics	Headline Politics		
	103	VIVA	526 507	The West Wing	Encounters	In Dreams	Psychic Inv.	Encounters	Judging Amy			Commander
	106	RDI	126 730	Le Téléjournal (SC)		RDI en direct	Le National	Le Téléjournal (SC)	Le Journal RDI	Le National		Le Téléjournal

critics' corner

Miracle on 34th Street

Even if your heart belongs to the 1947 original with Edmund Gwenn, Maureen O'Hara and Natalie Wood, this 1994 remake of the holiday classic isn't half bad. Richard Attenborough plays the store Santa who believes with all his heart that he's the real deal, with Elizabeth Perkins and Mara Wilson as the cynical mother and daughter he has to convince. 8 PM on CBXT

The Mentalist

In this episode, the team learns that a wealthy investment banker who was found murdered inside his locked safe room was living a dual life. Patrick sets up a mental conundrum to see which of the suspects will show his true colors in "Ladies in Red." 8 PM on EDACCESS; 11 PM on KREM

10th Annual A Home for the Holidays With Faith Hill

The country singer lends star power to the latest edition of the annual special. As always, it offers true stories of families that have benefited from taking in a new member. Other performers include Gavin Rossdale, Jamie Foxx and Tim McGraw. 9 PM on KREM



Twilight's Taylor to be replaced in sequel?
Rumours have been running rampant that Twilight star Taylor Lautner, who played Jacob Black, will be replaced in the sequel, New Moon, tvguide.com reports. **IMDB.COM**

Celebrity Buzz

Amy's topless holiday splashed on tabs

PEOPLE Amy Winehouse, who's had an ongoing battle with drugs and erratic behavior since she shot to fame in 2007, is making a splash across the British tabloids thanks to her revealing holiday, where she was photographed on the beach and on her balcony sans top, popeater.com reports.

Still, despite the fact that the tabs are swarming over the nudity, they're generous with the compliments when it comes to Winehouse's appearance.

The Daily Mail says Winehouse "looks the pic-

ture of health as she piles on the pounds" in the new photos, in which it's obvious she's put some pounds on her once-frail frame. A Mail source says that Winehouse "has hired a personal trainer," and that she's "very enthusiastic about her sessions and bounds in to work out on the bikes, weights and Power Plate."



The Sun was a bit less congratulatory, running video of and describing a topless dance that Winehouse did on the balcony of her St. Lucia hotel room. They describe it as a "bizarre balcony boogie," saying Winehouse "was caught on video as she lurched from one side to another, waving her arms."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Nick Cannon's ex speaks out about Mariah marriage

RELATIONSHIP Mariah Carey and Nick Cannon's secret wedding may have surprised fans, but it also caught someone else off guard — Cannon's ex-girlfriend Christina Milian, people.com reports.

"I was like, 'Really?' It just seemed like a weird match," says the singer and actress tells Rap-Up magazine. "But I was happy for him. I always feel like Nick works hard to get what he wants, whether that be women — that's how he got me."

METRO NEWS SERVICES



Britney and Benji rumours false

DATING As one might have guessed, all those rumours linking Britney Spears and Benji Madden were completely false, popeater.com reports. The singers definitely aren't dating, Spears' rep told E! News. "The claims made by In Touch are completely false ... There is not an ounce of truth to any of it," she said.

Last week, In Touch magazine claimed Spears' father Jamie Spears and her manager Larry Rudolph set the two stars up on a few dates — creating an instant love connection. But have no fear. Spears isn't jumping back into the dating game with Paris Hilton's ex just yet, says her rep.

Since the release of her album Circus, Spears has been linked to several celebrities including Chace Crawford, Jesse Metcalfe and Michael Phelps. None of which panned out or have been confirmed.

METRO NEWS SERVICES



Sam hospitalized for depression?

PEOPLE Samantha Ronson is reportedly suffering from depression, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The 31-year-old DJ was accompanied by girlfriend Lindsay Lohan as she visited Los Angeles' Cedars-Sinai Medical Centre on Sunday — less than a day after it was reported she had been making frantic phone calls to friends complaining of stress and exhaustion.

A source told Life and Style Weekly magazine: "Samantha was calling around. She has been suffering from depression and from

lack of food and sleep. Lindsay has been helping her through this as she has been through it herself two years ago."

Doctors were reportedly called to Samantha's home shortly before she visited the medical facility.

Despite her trip to Cedars-Sinai being described as "relatively minor," witnesses say Samantha was taken into the hospital in a wheelchair through the emergency entrance.

METRO NEWS SERVICES



GETTY IMAGES PHOTOS

Ritchie rebounds with heiress Khan

RELATIONSHIP Just as their divorce settlement was making news, Madonna's ex-husband, Guy Ritchie, appeared to be celebrating his freedom and the holidays with someone new — millionaire heiress Jemima Khan, people.com reports.

The two attended a London dinner party together earlier this month at the home of public relations honcho Matthew Freud and his wife, Elisabeth Murdoch, daughter of me-

dia mogul Rupert Murdoch, reports London's Telegraph.

METRO NEWS SERVICES



Sandler dresses up as a princess for storytime

PEOPLE Adam Sandler dresses up as a princess to read his daughters stories, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The Bedtime Stories actor and comedian likes to get into character when he regales tales to daughters Sadie, two, and newborn Sunny, who is a month old.

Adam, 42, said: "I like to dress up as the lead character in whatever story I am reading. This is a little weird because my daughter loves the Disney princesses. But you'd be surprised at how good I look in a ball gown."

"I hold the storybook and make up my own stories with the characters. This backfired when my daughter started watching movies and realized that Cinderella didn't drive for NASCAR."

METRO NEWS SERVICES



'Boy' Beyoncé jogs incognito in park

PEOPLE Beyoncé Knowles likes dressing as a boy, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The singer dons male clothes so she can go running in New York incognito.

Beyoncé, 27, said: "I love being able to run in Central Park. Just me and my trainer. I dress up like a boy and then no one knows it's me. I just keep moving."

Beyoncé's latest hit If I Were a Boy details what she would like to do if she were able to swap gender for a day.

METRO NEWS SERVICES



YAHOO! LIFESTYLE
CANADA

Everything about life, updated every day.

How to turn him on

Men can be mysterious creatures, especially when it comes to what turns them on. Wouldn't it be great to know exactly what gets him hot? Read what real men say gets them in the mood.

Getting all hot and bothered starts with just getting together. Let your man know when the time is right and he'll be more than happy to skip out on a boys night out in exchange for what you have in mind.

Ask your guy to tell you where he likes

to be touched. There are more than just the obvious hotspots. Even better, try to figure it out together.

Being confident in bed is sexy. Don't force something you're not comfortable with. Stick with what feels right and it'll enhance the mood for the both of you.



(continued online...)

Health + Fitness

Fashion + Beauty

Home + Garden

Food + Entertaining

To read more, visit

lifestyle.yahoo.ca

Matt details road trip adventure

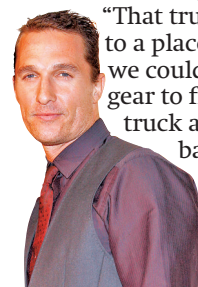
PEOPLE Matthew McConaughey was rescued by an 82-year-old Mexican woman named Matty after his truck broke down, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The actor was on a 14-day road trip to Baja, Calif. with a friend when the pair's vehicle broke down in the middle of the desert.

Matty loaned McConaughey her 1981

Isuzu truck, he says. "That truck got us to a place where we could get the gear to fix my truck and get back on the road."

METRO NEWS SERVICES





Michele McDougall, Weather Specialist & Host – Breakfast Television
“My favorite part is reporting the weather. It fascinates me, and as we know around here, it’s always changing, keeping forecasters on their toes.” **WEEKDAYS AT 6 A.M.**

Take Five

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11
12					13					14		
15					16					17		
			18					19	20			
21	22	23					24					
25					26	27					28	29
30				31						32		
33			34							35		
		36						37				
38	39					40	41					
42					43	44				45	46	47
48					49					50		
51					52					53		

Crossword across

- 1 Prompted on stage
5 “— the night before Christmas”
9 Perch
12 Geometry find
13 Colonial Nathan
14 Commotion
15 Yankee pattern
17 Not a lot
18 Drag behind
19 Song of praise
21 Recorded
24 Right on the map?
25 Oklahoma city
26 Times past, to Burns
30 Raggedy doll
- 31 Get the answer
32 — XING (street sign)
33 Nobody else’s business?
35 Swallow, e.g.
36 “Once — a time”
37 Available
38 Beat
40 “So be it”
42 Sphere
43 Part of a gun
48 Time of your life?
49 One of HOMES
50 Tardy
51 “Le Coq —”
52 Campus VIP
53 Otherwise

Crossword down

- 1 Upper limit
2 Swiss canton
3 Still, in verse
4 Destroyed, as in hopes
5 By way of, briefly
6 Banshee’s cry
7 Matterhorn, for one
8 Amount of ooze
9 Diaper fastener
10 Concept
11 Burg
16 Young Mr. Lincoln
20 Donkey
21 Squad
22 Domini preceder
23 ATM ID
24 Green-eyed monster
- 26 Crazy one
27 Every crumb
28 Dweeb
29 Vortex
31 Parodied
34 Antonym (Abbr.)
35 Bracelet type
37 Coop occupant
38 Frog’s cousin
39 Therefore
40 Operatic solo
41 Carriage
44 Anger
45 Crony
46 “Monty Python” opener
47 Born

PREVIOUS DAY’S CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS:

M	O	A	T		A	I	D		R	E	A	M
I	N	V	E	I	G	L	E		E	T	N	A
S	E	A	T		B	E	L	T		N	U	T
				H	I	S		O	B	O	I	S
A	C	H	E	S			A	N	E	W		
P	A	I	R		N	E	A	T		N	I	K
E	L	D		E	A	R	T	H		T	A	B
				M	E	A	T	P	I	E		D
					R	O	H	E		A	R	M
E	X	T		A	N	T		D	N	A		
A	R	A	B			H	E	A	T		W	A
C	A	R	L			A	N	T	I	L	L	E
H	Y	P	E			S	E	A		S	E	T

9	3	5	4	2	6	8	1	7
4	7	8	3	5	1	6	2	9
6	2	1	9	8	7	3	4	5
7	5	2	1	3	4	9	6	8
8	4	3	6	9	2	5	7	1
1	6	9	5	7	8	4	3	2
3	9	7	2	4	5	1	8	6
2	1	4	8	6	9	7	5	3
5	8	6	7	1	3	2	9	4

Find today’s answers + play more games at metronews.ca

SUDOKU SOLVE TIME:	17-21 min	Smart
Under 13 min	21-25 min	Not bad
13-17 min	25+ min	Keep practising

Metro Recipe of the Day



Grilled Chicken Salad with Oranges

INGREDIENTS:

- 1/3 cup (75 mL) orange juice
- 2 tbsp (25 mL) lemon juice
- 3 tbsp (45 mL) extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) Dijon mustard
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- Salt to taste
- Freshly ground pepper to taste
- 1 lb (450 grams) boneless skinless chicken breasts, trimmed
- 1/4 cup (50 mL) pistachios, or slivered almonds toasted
- 8 cups (2 L) or 5 oz (140 grams) mesclun salad mix
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) thinly sliced red onion
- 2 medium oranges, peeled, quartered, and sliced

METHOD:

- Place orange juice, lemon juice, oil, mustard, garlic, salt and pepper in a jar with a tight-fitting lid; shake to blend. Reserve 1/3 cup (75 mL) for salad and 3 tbsp (45 mL) for basting.
- Place remaining dressing in a shallow glass dish. Add chicken and turn to coat. Cover and marinate in refrigerator for at least 20 minutes.

- Preheat grill to medium. Lightly oil grill rack. Remove chicken from marinade and discard marinade. Grill chicken 4 to 6 inches (10 to 15 cm) from heat source, basting cooked sides with dressing reserved for basting, until no longer pink in centre, 4 to 6 minutes per side. Transfer to cutting board and let stand 5 minutes.
- Meanwhile, toast almonds or pistachios in small dry skillet over medium-low heat, stirring constantly, until light golden, 2 to 3 minutes. Transfer to bowl and let cool.
- Place salad mix and onion in large bowl. Toss with dressing reserved for salad. Divide salad among 4 plates. Slice chicken and distribute. Scatter orange slices over top and sprinkle with pistachios or almonds.

SERVES 4

rd.ca

For nutritional information on this and other great recipes, go to rd.ca or check out Key Ingredients in this month’s Reader’s Digest, on newsstands now!



Horoscopes

AVATAR VENUS

ARIES
MARCH 21-APRIL 20
Sincere gestures will make the difference in love. Time will seem to slither by. Being on the highway of love makes you dizzy.



TAURUS
APRIL 21-MAY 21
Give something one more try. Retrace your steps to find a lost object. Do more than expected in order to be rewarded



LIBRA
SEPT 23-OCT 23
Old friends are stunned by a revelation. Open all packages with care. A dental problem subsides for a while.



SCORPIO
OCT 24-NOV 22
Somebody will remember to get in touch. A bully will take his lumps. Don’t make life changes right now.



GEMINI
MAY 22-JUNE 21
Don’t pry into anyone’s secrets. An investment strategy seems like a joke. A nervous person confesses their true intentions.



SAGITTARIUS
NOV 23-DEC 21
Your enthusiasm grows due to unexpected success. Count on a mating game moving fast. Help somebody make contact with reality.



CANCER
JUNE 22-JULY 22
A man feels like a fool for love. Someone’s fickleness is creepy. There’s no consolation prize if a full effort isn’t given.



CAPRICORN
DEC 22-JAN 20
Hypocrisy will be exposed by an accident. Don’t mistake friendliness for love. The time has come for closure with the past.



LEO
JULY 23-AUG 23
A pleased person makes an incredible offer. Don’t throw in the towel when friendship hits a snag. Hold off making electronics purchases.



AQUARIUS
JAN 21-FEB 18
An accounting error works in your favour. A wise woman tells the truth. A good friend brings something special.



VIRGO
AUG 24-SEPT 22
Don’t wonder how things might have worked out. Watching a paranoid person causes problems. Facts will make you come to your senses.



PISCES
FEB 19-MARCH 20
Waiting for something to happen will irritate you. Don’t pretend to be an expert if you aren’t. Embarrassment will limit public activity.



This day in history

- DEC. 23, 1893: The opera Hänsel und Gretel by Engelbert Humperdinck was first performed.
- DEC. 23, 1954: The first human kidney transplant is performed by Dr. Joseph E. Murray at Peter Bent Brigham Hospital in Boston, Massachusetts.
- DEC. 23, 1979: Soviet war in Afghanistan: Soviet forces occupy Kabul, the Afghan capital.
- DEC. 23, 2005: Chad declares a state of war against Sudan following a Dec. 18 attack on Adré, which left about 100 people dead.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

WORDY GURDY®

BY TRICKY RICKY KANE

1. Is without Bill Clinton’s instrument (1)
2. Birdbrain’s future stallions (1)
3. Wash out the color from a sandy spot (1)
4. Hugely tall NBA star Kobe (2)
5. “Laugh-In” comic Johnson’s bashes (2)
6. One with faith in a mote-removing maid (2)
7. Stick-up stuck-up-ed-ness (3)
- Every answer is a rhyming pair of words (like FAT CAT and DOUBLE TROUBLE), and they will fit in the letter squares. The number after the definition tells you how many syllables in each word.
- ANSWERS
1. ARTES PARTIES 2. DUSTY TRUSTERS 3. BLEACH BEACH 4. GIANT BRYANT
5. LAUGH IN 6. DUSTY TRUSTERS 7. ROBERTY SNOBBERY
12-23-08

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